

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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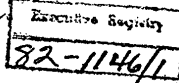
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SUSPENSE		Date			

Remarks:

Executive Secretary

4/26/82
Date



*I thought you would be interested
in the enclosed information*

With the compliments of
CONGRESSMAN ROBERT K. DORNAN
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
California

WTH
OEXA 82-1079



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

ROBERT K. DORNAN
TWENTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT
CALIFORNIA

April 3, 1982

President Ronald W. Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I attended the yearly Defense Intelligence Agency briefing, Soviet Military Trends and Capabilities, on February 24. This was the sixth consecutive year as a Congressman that I received the superb Soviet threat briefing [redacted] This year, after three hours of viewing evidence and listening to the stunning intelligence analysis of the malignant growth of Soviet offensive power, I walked away in a state of shock. The growth over just this past year far outstrips the increase that I've been briefed on over the preceding five years.

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I'm sorry to say, Mr. President, that there were only 15 members of the Armed Services Committee present. I was the only, repeat only, visiting member of any other House of Representatives committee.

During the month following that briefing, I encouraged other House members to go over to the Pentagon and receive the [redacted] briefing on their own but had no success. Then the Republican Study Committee came to the rescue and sponsored a repeat briefing in the Cannon House Office Building on March 24. I went back for the full three-hour [redacted] briefing. There was significantly better attendance this time as 54 members of the House sat in stunned silence. [redacted] had agreed with me at the February briefing that the only word to describe the increase in Soviet military capability over last year was "awesome."

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I understand, Mr. President, that you have also received this same briefing. That is why your defense budget is so reasonable

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and necessary to you and to me. But what about the intelligent but uninformed American citizen who has to pay the bill?

Following the briefing I polled my colleagues about a course of action to support you. Everyone I spoke with -- Bob Livingston, Dan Lungren, Ray McGrath, Bob Lagomarsino, Toby Roth, et. al. -- to a man, agreed that these Soviet threat facts, classified or not, must be given to the American people. Mr. President, that opinion was probably unanimous with all 55 Members of Congress in attendance.

We discussed that there might be a few specific points of intelligence that could not be released because of compromising sources. However, we were in accord that certainly 90-95% could be made public information.

Since we are not talking about U.S. military capability or methods of collecting intelligence, but about Soviet capability, and since the Soviet leaders obviously know the extent of their own buildup, why should only a few privileged Americans be fully informed of the present danger? At my urging, the ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, the Honorable William Dickinson, one of your great supporters, has promised to circulate a "Dear Colleague" letter with the signatures of all those present at the March briefing, asking that the American people be made aware of the gravity of the Russian threat by showing them hard evidence.

If you so order the release of the [] briefing, I believe that prior to general public release, in order to insure proper dissemination of the information and to prevent any initial skepticism by the news media, you have to privately prepare media with the extensive body of knowledge that they will be asked to transmit to the American people.

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Therefore, there should be a briefing at the White House as soon as possible for the Chief Executive Officers of the nation's "prestige media" (an excellent phrase by Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick).

Mr. President, during previous periods in our history, such as World War II, we granted secret clearances to members of the written

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press and radio. The beloved combat correspondent, Ernie Pyle, knew about every TOP SECRET operation in every war theater which he covered. He had to know. He hit the beaches with our young men.

Isn't it time we trust the powerful leaders of mass media? We have no other choice. I feel, Mr. President, that you must seek counsel and professional opinion of our "prestige media" leaders as to how to get this story of Soviet offensive power out to the American people so that your defense budget, which I support 100%, is perceived as a reasonable response to Soviet expansion.

In order to counter Soviet propaganda and disinformation, we must conduct White House TOP SECRET briefings for the C.E.O.s of the three major networks plus PBS; our three largest newspapers (the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, and the Washington Post) plus the Wall Street Journal; and, Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report. Each Chief Executive Officer should be invited to bring with him, to the White House, his News President or Senior Editor or another top corporate officer of his choice.

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I believe that "going public" with the substantial body of evidence contained within the [redacted] briefing will in no way compromise our national security. My colleagues agree [redacted]

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I am firmly convinced that disclosure will significantly increase public support for your defense budget. Given the growing hostile

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mood of both Houses of Congress toward defense spending, your declassification of this information will provide a dramatic way in which to refocus public attention on the diminished state of our comparable defense capabilities.

Mr. President, our defense budget is in danger of being meat-axed by Congressmen and Senators who have not had this briefing, refuse to get this briefing, don't care about getting this briefing, or have had the briefing but are so terrified of losing their jobs in Congress that they are unwilling or unable to try and convince an uninformed and skeptical public that your defense positions are worthy of complete support.

The Soviets and their puppet satellites are hoping that we will continue to keep what "they" are doing TOP SECRET.

Time is running out.

Mr. President, I am at your service. With God's help, the American people put you, the right man, in the right job at precisely the right moment.

President Thomas Jefferson, one of our mutual heroes, said many times, "Give the American people the facts and they'll make the right decision."

Let's give our fellow citizens the right stuff upon which to base their decisions.

Respectfully,



ROBERT K. DORNAN
Member of Congress